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MINOR NOTICES.

MR. A. C. CHAMPNEYS' "History of English" (New York: Macmillan & Co.) is one of those books which a careful teacher would hardly be willing to recommend until he had tried it in his class room, so numerous are the the manuals, similar in scope and construction, that are already in constant use in our high schools and colleges. The book is one, however, that might well attract the teacher who is dissatisfied with the text-book he has been using, and it might be not uninviting to the general reader who is in search of a handy volume devoted to the history of the development of his native tongue. The most attractive feature of the author's method of presenting his subject is his copious citation of illustrative extracts from writers of all periods and local sections. There are so many of these extracts that the teacher will be enabled to expand his work *ad libitum* and the general reader to dispense with buying a companion volume of specimens of literature. Another good feature of the book, from the standpoint of the two classes above mentioned, is the author's endeavor to treat his subject as far as possible without dealing too largely with that *bête noir* of younger students, phonology. It may be noted that Mr. Champneys has relied upon the most recent and best authorities, although his frequent citations from the works of Mr. T. L. Kington Oliphant might not meet with the approbation of "F. H.," the veteran philological protagonist of the *New York Nation*. We cannot say as much for the grace of Mr. Champneys' style as for the painstaking labor that has gone to compose his volume.

A RECENT volume in *Heath's English Classics* (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co.) is "Select Speeches of Daniel Webster," edited by Mr. A. J. George, who has done a good deal of such

work for the same firm and who is expected to do a good deal more. The art of book-making is certainly one in which Americans are beginning to excel, and we believe that the day will soon come when every school teacher will make his own text-books as a regular part of his business. The method of making such a book as the one before us ought not to be hard to discover. One step in preparation may be noted. Mr. George applied to two prominent politicians and got their help in selecting the speeches to be studied and then dedicated his book to one of them in the following terms: "To the Hon. George F. Hoar, LL. D., a worthy successor of Daniel Webster in the Senate of the United States." This, we suggest, is a most enterprising method of editing a text-book. What patriotic American school-boy would not feel gratified at studying a school-book in the making of which a United States Senator had had a share? We hope, by the way, that Mr. Hoar had no share in the notes, indeed we feel certain of it, for he must know that the James River flows by Jamestown and that it is an excess of local patriotism to intimate that, by his handling of the Dartmouth College case, Webster *founded* a new *school* of constitutional law. But after all, what have these points, or indeed most of the points covered by these notes, to do with *literature*?

WHILE we are on the subject of English literature, we may commend very heartily the succinct primer on *Chaucer* which Mr. Alfred W. Pollard has recently written for the Macmillans. He has presented in a brief but thorough way the results of the latest Chaucerian researches, and has thus furthered the study of a poet whose works are an increasing delight to men.

MR. WALTER MALONE'S "Narcissus and Other Poems" (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company), while showing the immature characteristics of youth, does not repel us on account of the classical themes of its two leading poems or by its obvious echoes of Keats. It is a good sign, we think,

when a young poet echoes Keats and when he loves Greece. While we wish to have Southern poets that sing of Southern themes, we are well aware that it is a dangerous procedure to endeavor to check a poet's imagination; and we are not sure that the Southern or American poems, written in answer to repeated popular or critical demands for such productions, will ever be any better reading than the sincere if immature outpouring of a Keats-smitten poet. We do not think, however, that Mr. Malone need necessarily remain Keats-smitten. We fancy that we can detect, especially in his sonnets, the metrical felicity that marks a *singer*, and if this be so, then sooner or later our poet will develop an authentic note of his own. What this note may be must be left to time and the development of powers that time may be trusted to bring.

THE first volume of Mr. Henry Craik's long promised companion series to Ward's "English Poets" has just appeared under the title "English Prose Selections" (New York and London, Macmillan & Co.) It covers the period from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century inclusive. The plan is naturally that followed by Mr. Ward. Each author selected is treated by a specialist who writes a critical introduction which is preceded by a brief biographical summary. An original feature is seen in the editor's purpose to furnish each period with a separate introduction—a plan which may be commended for future editions of Mr. Ward's volumes, although, of course, the noble general introduction by Matthew Arnold could never be dispensed with. This first instalment of a series which has been variously announced as consisting of four or five volumes, includes fifty-two writers of all degrees of prominence, from Chaucer and Sidney to William Clowes and Timothy Bright. Among the chief contributors, besides the editor, are Mr. Saintsbury, Mr. Ker, Mr. Churton Collins, Professor Hales, and Professor A. W. Ward. A commendable feature of the critical notices is their brevity. It is refreshing to see that even a Tory like Mr. Saintsbury is still sufficiently in fashion to have grave

doubts as to the actual existence of that delightful old traveller Sir John Mandeville. It is not so pleasant to find that, while the anonymous *Complaint of Scotland* is admitted, *The Paston Letters* are not drawn upon at all. It is to be regretted, too, that Mr. Reichel, to whom fell the pleasant task of presenting Sir Thomas More, failed to give a single selection from the delightful letters of that great man. But every editor is fallible, and Mr. Craik has done an important and needed work. We desire to commend especially the introductory essay on "The Earlier History of English Prose," furnished by one of the ablest and most prolific contributors to the volume, Mr. W. P. Ker, who, if we mistake not, has recently done service to students of another class, by editing the late Professor Sellar's delightful work on Horace and the Elegiac Poets.

IN re-issuing in a detached and cheap form Mr. Frederic Harrison's admirable essay "The Choice of Books," Messrs. Macmillan & Company have done a real service to the cause of good literature. But like all gifts to the greedy, this gift will be received with cries for more of the same sort. When one thinks of the number of good books that are still practically inaccessible to poor students or to readers who have not been trained to *buy* books, on account of the high prices still attached to them, one grows despondent, especially when one has just glanced over the stock of a dealer in paper-back novels. Take for example, Arnold's "Essays in Criticism." Could not the two volumes, which are retailed we believe for three dollars, be brought into one, and sold for a dollar, or, in paper, for even less? The reduction in price ought to cause an increase in sales that would repay the publishers, and spread greatly the influence of good literature. But publishers know their own business better than we do, and we make our suggestion modestly. We have, at least, much to be grateful for in this popular re-issue of "The Choice of Books." We have re-read it with pleasure, and found that its interest and charm and value have not

decreased with the years. Perhaps particular sentences like those beginning "Poor Lamb," on page 10, grate on us now more than they did formerly, but then we may have grown more dogmatic than is good for us.

THE twentieth volume of the "Southern Historical Society Papers" has just been issued by its indefatigable Secretary, Dr. R. A. Brock. It does not seem to differ much in scope or method from those which have preceded it. There is, we are told, abundant material for future volumes already secured, but the funds available for publication are always precarious. This should not be. The Society ought to be endowed, and more interest should be taken by its members in its management. As matters stand, Dr. Brock is the Society, and he deserves all praise for his self sacrifice in keeping himself, that is, the Society, going. The volumes he has edited are replete with valuable information, but they, as well as the Secretary's constant appeals, show very well how matters stand. They are scrappy, they represent very little individual specialization or research on the part of members of the Society or of Southern students of history. They smack of the scissors and the paste-pot rather than of the desk and the library. Long-winded orations, newspaper articles, obituary notices—these take the place of careful studies of campaigns or battles and of illustrative documents on which future historians can rely. Orations on memorial occasions may be good or bad—usually, we opine, the latter—but even the good ones are published in newspapers and magazines or in pamphlet form, and are readily accessible, and the bad ones should perish as soon as possible. Why, then, include them in the volumes of a society founded for the purpose of furnishing materials for history? Have not the members of that society the privilege of using scissors and paste-pot as well as the editor of these volumes? But let us repeat that the editor is not to be blamed for this scrap-book work. He is willing enough to print scholarly studies and all the original documents that can be sent him.

We do not fancy at all that he has a hankering for orations and obituary notices; but he must fill his volumes somehow, and he cannot be expected to spin four hundred octavo pages out of his own brain. The members of his Society and the South generally fail to furnish him with proper materials—and so he clips and pastes. Shall we not wake up to our duty, and become members of this patriotic Society and co-workers with its thrice-patriotic Secretary?

AMONG the many cheap editions of standard works with which publishers are favoring us, none deserves more commendation than the cheaper re-issue of the well-known "Aldine Poets," by Messrs. George Bell & Sons, of London (New York, Macmillan & Co.) For many years this edition of the British poets has been a standard one, but its publishers do not believe that a standard should stand still. If our memory serves us there were fifty-two volumes in the edition preceding this, but the present number is much greater. Already we have had Scott, in five volumes, edited by John Dennis; and Shelley, in five volumes, edited by Mr. Buxton Forman. And now we have Wordsworth, in seven volumes (the first three of which lie before us), edited by Professor Dowden; and we are promised others—among them Herrick, whom Mr. Saintsbury is to edit. In completeness, in careful editing, in mechanical execution, this series, considering its low price (seventy-five cents a volume), is a marvel. No one who buys books at all can now be excused for not owning a fairly complete set of the British poets. And what a priceless possession such a set is! Compared with it the costly encyclopædias and dictionaries and *editions de luxe* of our day seem jejune and of little value. And in this set these volumes of Wordsworth have no unimportant place. As the years go by his position as a great inspiring force is more and more recognized, even though his claims to universality, to the proud rank of a world-poet are definitely put aside. All the labors of Matthew Arnold, Professor Knight, and Professor Dowden will hardly avail to gain him a continental reputa-

tion; but for Englishmen and Americans, his place is secured. They must know him if they would understand the higher spiritual life of their own generation. To this knowledge of Wordsworth, few living men have contributed more than Professor Dowden; he is, therefore, an ideal editor for these volumes. He gives us besides a full memoir and some common sense notes, Wordsworth's latest text (which for Wordsworth, who was constantly amending his own work, means much) in Wordsworth's arrangement (which is not good, but necessary to the complete understanding of his poetry), with all Wordsworth's printed notes and those which he dictated to Miss Fenwick, together with a bibliography and other helps. The lately copyrighted "First Book of the Recluse," published for the first time in 1888, is, of course, omitted; otherwise this is a complete edition of Wordsworth's poetry, and an admirable and much needed one.

A WELCOME evidence of the growing and healthy interest in Germanistic studies comes to us in the form of a second and revised edition of *Hosmer's Short History of German Literature* (New York, Scribners). This book has been for fourteen years the best, or at least one of the best, introductions to German literature that has been available to American students, many of whom still look back with delight to the inspiration they derived from its reading, which gave a most welcome relief to the work of the class-room. The present revision will, no doubt, give the book a new lease of life; but we regret that more use has not been made of the intervening German investigations, for the citations are almost wholly confined to writers of the last generation, and these are not cited with the accuracy as to page and edition that modern scholarship is wont to demand. In short the book does not advance our knowledge; it is not in this higher sense original. But the student and the "general reader," on whom Professor Hosmer casts an eye in the preface, will miss this less than they will appreciate the easy style, the occa-

sional reminiscences of German travel, and the historical interludes with which he enlivens and lightens their studious labor.

THOSE enterprising Chicago publishers, Messrs. A. C. McClurg and Company, have recently added to their series, known as *Laurel Crowned Letters*, "The Best Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley," edited by a valued contributor to this REVIEW, Mr. Shirley Carter Hughson. It is late in the day to commend Shelley's exquisite letters, but we may say that this little volume contains many of the most delightful of them, and that it should be in the hands of every one who cannot own Mr. Forman's costly edition of Shelley's prose works. Mr. Hughson has contributed a brief introduction, which proves clearly that he has caught the spirit of the man he writes about. In other words, his introduction is modest, worthy, and touched by that spirit of appreciation which can inspire appreciation in others. There is little annotation, perhaps not enough for some readers, but this fault is after all only an excess of modesty, and unfortunately it is a rare fault in these days of over-edited books. We heartily commend the volume.

THE same publishers send us "References for Literary Workers," by Henry Matson. This is primarily a manual for debaters, but it may be of use to other literary workers. Some three hundred and twenty-four questions are propounded and discussed, and references to the chief authorities are appended. Although many of these questions hardly appear to be proper subjects for debating societies, there is not one that might not be taken as the subject of an oration or an essay, and so we are inclined to think that the book will prove invaluable as a help to college students who take a little literature while resting from athletics. Of course one cannot determine accurately the value of such a book as this of Mr. Matson's until one has used it constantly for some months, but it seems to us that he has done his work well,

and that it was a work worth doing. We commend his book, therefore, especially to college men, although as we have intimated there are few literary workers who would not find it advantageous to consult it occasionally.

AMONG the many attempts to aid the study of German literature in our schools, Bernhardt's "*Deutsche Litteraturgeschichte*" (Boston, Schönhoff), deserves a prominent place; and, where the foreign language is no barrier, the book will be found useful to general readers also, if, indeed, this be not its best use. What Professor Bernhardt undertakes to do, he does very well. But it is clear that a conspectus of the history of a literature so old and rich as the German, that can be condensed into seventy-two octavo pages, cannot be very full. He aims to name and characterize all authors of any eminence. Hence there is a plentiful lack of perspective. An equal space is given to Heine and to Eichendorf; and more is devoted to Uhland and to Lenau than to either; while the Gudrun Saga is allotted more space than is given to any of them and almost as much as to Scheffel's *Trompeter von Säkkingen*. This is, perhaps, inevitable; but if it is so, it suggests the query whether this attempt at fulness is not an error, whether the reader or the student would not be better served by six or eight studies of as many authors, which might be a real guide to his reading, than by a work so condensed that it can devote but half a page to Heine and but seven lines to Paul Heyse. We are disposed to feel, after a careful examination of this book, that the problem, how to give a conception of German literature as a whole to college students, is not yet solved, if, indeed, it be capable of solution.

It is with peculiar pleasure that we welcome the last of the many American contributions to the study of "*Faust*," which we owe to the scholarly acumen of Professor Thomas, of the University of Michigan, and to the zeal for sound learning which has always characterized its publishers, Heath & Co., of

Boston. Professor Thomas proposes to follow up this edition of the first part of "Faust" with a similar treatment of the second, a determination which we are sure will meet the approval of all thoughtful students, who must agree with his contention that the first part taken by itself is more difficult to comprehend than the two taken together. Yet we cannot but feel that this book is rather for the scholar than the teacher, unless it be in those favored institutions where the teaching force enables the favored few to pursue a very extended course. "Faust" is emphatically a book for those with experience of life, and such will not regret the careful detail and philological acumen of this profound and loving study, marking to our mind a distinct advance over any other American editor, translator, or commentator. An introduction of seventy-six pages treats concisely but clearly of the legend, the hold it took on Goethe's mind, and the refashioning he gave it. The text follows the standard Weimar edition, with variants relegated to an Appendix, while a second Appendix contains a bibliography, the more useful because it is not exhaustive. The notes are condensed into one hundred and three pages in which little will be missed, while at the same time little could be spared.

The author of the paper in this number entitled "A Southern Poet" desires us to state that Mr. Cawein's last volume "Red Leaves and Roses" appeared too late for notice. We may also point out that on page 293 of the same article the name of M. Baudelaire is misprinted.